

arduous, and they have suffered over the generations. Their ends have frayed into toes; ankles sprain, knees scuff and ache, hamstrings tear, hips turn brittle with age. Yet they present the clearest hieroglyph of our standing, the "greater than" section of their inverted V opens toward the earth, but the pointed end, like a divining rod, arrows toward human sweat and blood.

UMBERTO BOCCIONI

Sit in a chair. Try to keep still. Concentrate: stare at the table. You see the vase in its center, then the right front leg, then the left back leg, then the crack in the middle where the panels join, then some dust near the edge. To say nothing of blinking. You can't keep your eyes still, even when they're fixed on one thing. And your lungs inflate and deflate, your heart throbs like a piston. When you sleep, your body tosses and turns without you. Your "I" is like the needle of a speedometer in a racing car. At first, it wobbles, swinging back and forth like a pendulum. Then it starts to vibrate, tensing. Finally, it becomes focused, firm as a muscle, even as the trees start to blur. All around you cranes nod, stiff gears groan like lovers, jack-hammers and jackasses call out. The reds are so bright, the blues so deep, everything swirls and pulses as if you'd been hit over the head. Everything clears its throat, jostles elbows. Sit still. The racket swells: the noise of the street penetrates the house. The walls of the house are still here. You're still here. But not even the mirror's reflection is instantaneous.

— Mark Cunningham

Opelika AL

GARDEN TOUR, AUTUMN

Tiger Lilies, Periwinkles, Larkspur, Cock's Comb,
Red-Hot-Pokers, Geraniums,
Lupines,
Joe Pie Weed (eight feet tall),
The Bess Truman Rose, the
tea rose, salmon, tangerine, white, blush,
marigolds, elephant grass,
sunflowers, dwarf dahlias,
calla lilies, cannas,
dragon's blood sedum, ajuga, English Ivy,
Rattlesnake Ivy, Virginia Creeper,

Trumpet Vine, caladium,
hens'n'chicks,
papyrus, water lilies,
sacred lotus, poppies,
four-o'clocks, hollyhocks,
zinias, purple, yellow, orange and pink,
a goldfish gulping at the surface of green
water, but
what I really remember
is the woman who stopped to spank
her little boy, 8 or 9 good
solid whacks on his butt,
he didn't cry once, just stood there and
took it among the flowers.

HEAVEN

Baked potato
sour cream
butter
salt
pepper
fresh chives
&
all the time
in the world

— Carl M. Daniels

Prell VA

DISABLED VETERAN

Tom and I blow up
a small bomb out back
next to the river.
shaking the neighbors'
fields of corn.
The Air Force Lt. Col.
down the road called
the state police, the ones
with the blue silly hats
that make them look 7' tall.
"We had a report of gunfire,"
they say.
"I was out back plinking
with my .22," I lied.
Better to have lived and lied
than to go with them.